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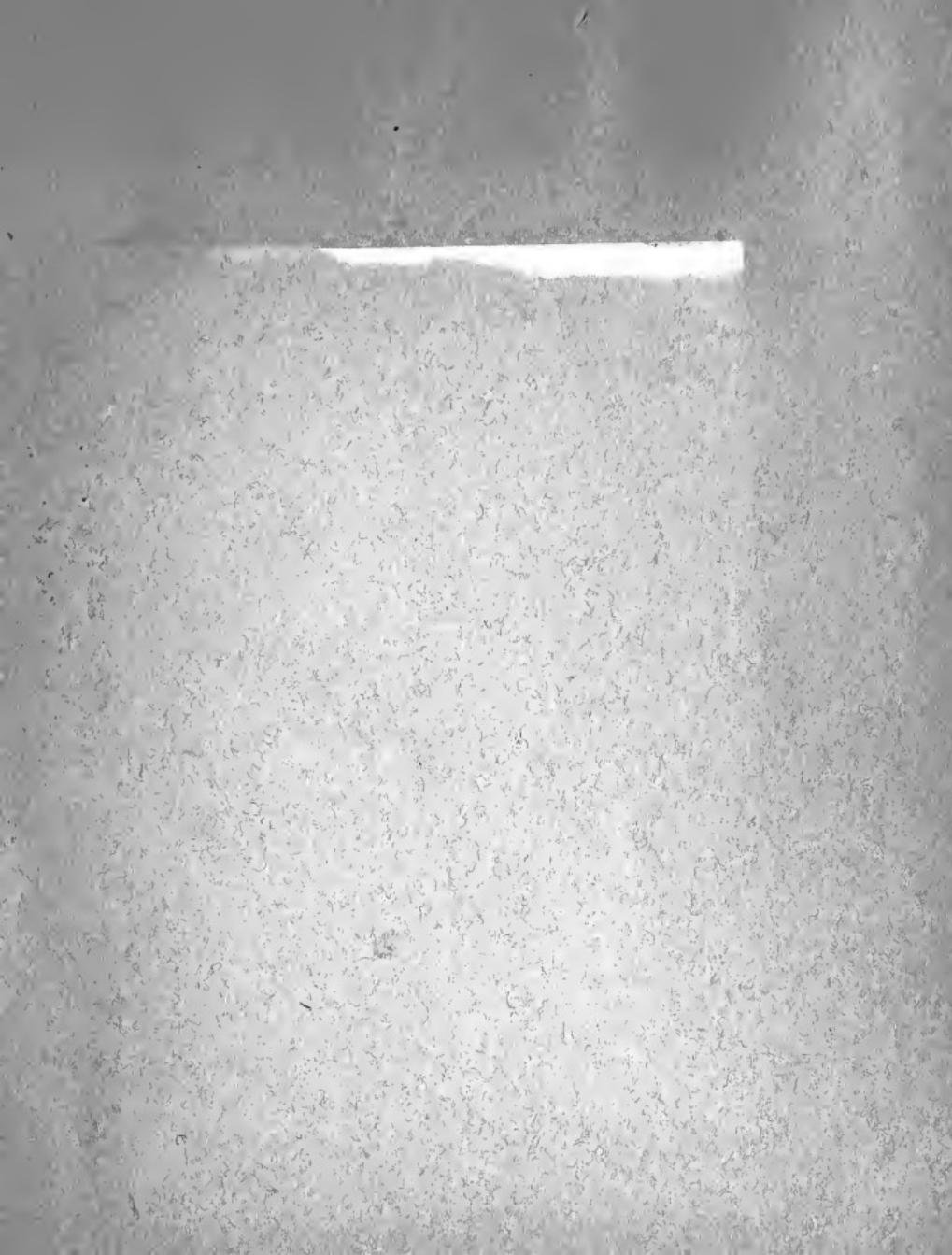
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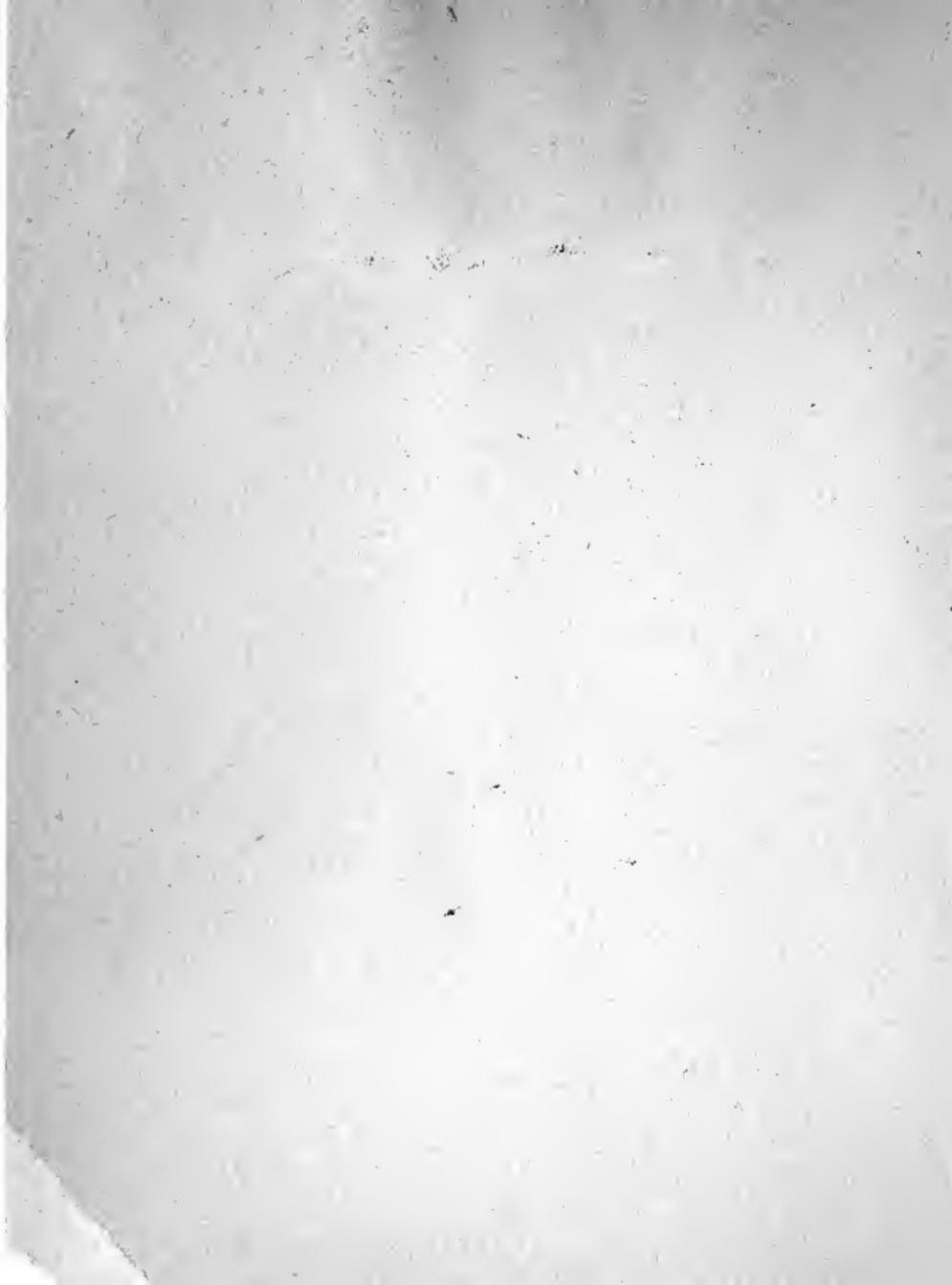
THE VENUS OF MILO



Wm. C. Brewster & Son
July 17, 1890









A very faint, light gray watermark of a classical building with four columns and a triangular pediment occupies the background of the page.

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THE
VENUS OF MILO.
ITS DISCOVERY,

THE THEORIES CONCERNING IT,
ITS SUBSEQUENT HISTORY.



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1878.

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THE VENUS OF MILO.

I.

ITS DISCOVERY.



N the latter part of February, 1820, a Greek peasant named Georges, working in his garden in the modern village of Castro, built on the summit of a high mountain in the island of Milo,—or Melos,—unearthed some fragments of marble that induced him to continue his digging, because the stones promised to be useful as material for building purposes. In his immediate vicinity there had been discovered, in the year 1814, an amphitheatre built of

marble, about one hundred and twenty feet in circumference, with nine rows of seats.

There were also near the spot, ancient tombs that had been hollowed in the rocks of the mountain side; so that from the sequel we have every reason to suppose that Georges, although a peasant, had ever in his mind the expectation of some day finding that which would repay his labor far better than years of toil, as a tiller of the soil. If it was so his time had at last arrived. He continued his excavations until he reached a wall and opened to view the top of a niche, which he explored for some seven or eight feet below the surface of the earth. There was this statue, in several pieces, and mixed with them three heads, or *hermae*, one of Bacchus, one of Mercury, and one of Hercules. Although the peasant was ignorant of the value of his discovery, he nevertheless knew that this was for him a prize worth

guarding; and fearing that, if it should become known to the authorities, he might not be permitted to profit by it, he carried to his hut the upper half of the marble and concealed it there.

The French Consul at Milo at that time was M. Brest, a Frenchman born in Greece ; and to him Georges immediately proposed the acquisition of the statue for the sum of twelve hundred francs, but M. Brest not being confident of his own judgment, did not dare to make the purchase. About that time the French corvette *La Chevrette* cast her anchor in the roadstead, and in the number of her company was M. Dumont d'Urville — in later years an Admiral, but at this time a subaltern — charged with the botanical department of the expedition for which the *Chevrette* was fitted out. By invitation of the Consul, M. d'Urville saw the statue, and being impressed with its beauty, at once recommended its pur-

chase. He also made a sketch of it in pencil and wrote in his diary an account of it, and when his vessel arrived at Constantinople he acquainted the French Ambassador with its existence. M. Brest, for reasons best known to himself, did not act upon the advice given him, but wrote to the Marquis de Riviere, asking his pleasure in the matter, but his letter was delayed and reached its destination only after a long time had elapsed. Meanwhile the Ambassador, on the representation of M. d'Urville, had thought it of sufficient importance to dispatch his secretary, the Vicomte de Marcellus—his nephew—to Milo, with instructions to purchase the statue for him.

Says one authority, “This commission could not have been confided to a better than M. le Vicomte, who employed in it all the zeal and intelligence which could be desired, and who to much firmness and gentleness of character united

a varied knowledge; and speaking the modern Greek language, could, better than any other, enter into negotiation with the inhabitants of the country, and be more likely to overcome the obstacles that he was likely to and did meet with."

Nearly three months had elapsed since the finding of the statue, when M. de Marcellus, in the schooner *Estafette*, arrived at the island. In the meantime the peasant had become anxious to realize on his hidden Goddess, and in spite of certain promises which M. Brest claimed had been given to him, an offer of the statue was made to a Greek priest,—who was in bad odor with his spiritual superiors,—who bargained for it at the greatly reduced price of seven hundred and fifty piastres and a vestment. This priest intended to send it as a present to a Prince in Constantinople,—a man whom he feared, but

whose influence he desired to gain,—knowing that he had a great weakness for antiques because of the profit accruing from the sale of them, rather than for any love of art.

At the very hour of the arrival of M. de Marcellus at Milo, the statue was being conveyed to the shore to be shipped on a vessel flying the Turkish flag; and immediately the Consul,—M. Brest,—went on board the schooner, where, learning the object of her visit, he announced to the Vicomte the loss of the Venus and complained bitterly of the lack of faith with which he had been treated. Happily the wind was not favorable for the departure of the Turkish vessel, and M. de Marcellus immediately landed, assembled the men in authority, showed them his firman, told them the object of his visit and demanded the recall of the statue and its delivery to him. Says the same authority just quoted, “He spoke

with severity of the inconsistency of their conduct, their want of faith in their engagements with France,—in the person of the Consul, M. Brest,—of the bad effect which such a manner of dealing must necessarily produce on their commercial relations; and was even obliged to threaten to have recourse to force to compel them to keep the bargain they had broken.”

Finally, after much resistance and after the conference had consumed the better part of two days, (during which time the priest had refused to allow any one to board his vessel,) the chiefs of the island, in spite of the well founded fears with which the resentment of the priest and the Prince inspired them, submitted to the demands of the representative of France. He hastened to bargain with the peasant Georges,—to whom the priest had given only a promise, and who, seeing his opportunity, advanced the price much above

his first, which was paid without hesitation and several hundred francs added as a *douceur*.

M. de Marcellus then had the satisfaction of removing the Venus to his own vessel,—although no mention is made of the attitude assumed by the priest, after this sudden change in the aspect of affairs,—or of how he came to deliver up that which it would apparently have been so easy for him to keep. Then for the first time, M. de Marcellus saw the marble, “the beauty of which,” he said, “recompensed him for all his efforts and made him proud of the conquest he had won for France.” The precious fragments, with the others found at the same time, not parts of the Venus, were sewed in sacks and packed with the utmost care for the voyage; and in two days after her arrival the Estafette sailed for Constantinople, touching at Athens, Smyrna, and other ports, where the statue was shown to many persons who

had already heard of its fame; and thus says one historian, "She voyaged in triumph over the seas from which she was born and found a new life in the worship of all who came to look upon her."

But the authorities of Milo, who had wrested a bargain from the hands of the fawning priest and thrifty Prince, were visited with their displeasure, and by the latter condemned to pay him seven thousand piastres damages. He even went so far as to make demands on the French Consul; but M. de Riviere, the Ambassador, having been informed thereof, complained to the Grand Vizier, whereupon the Prince was severely reprimanded and ordered to restore the money, and moreover, in his turn, to pay a fine of eighty thousand piastres.

The occasion was furthermore improved to procure a firman from the Sublime Porte, which was published in all the islands of Greece,

directing that the French should be favored in their transactions and in the acquisition of such monuments of antiquity as they might desire to make.

Ten months thereafter, or on the first of March, 1821, the Venus found a resting-place and a throne in the Royal Museum of the Louvre. The history of those ten months is a blank, like the years she passed in her subterranean niche on the mountain top in Milo.

What were these fragments of marble, so carefully kept by M. de Marcellus, and what was their condition?

Fortunately these questions we can answer with confidence, for their first guardian made a complete list of the various pieces as they were shipped on board the *Estafette*, which is as follows:—

“No. 1. The nude bust of the statue.

“No. 2. The inferior part draped.

“No. 3. The bunch of hair, vulgarly called the chignon, which I replaced, and which I saw adapts itself exactly to the head.

“No. 4. A forearm, shapeless and mutilated.

“No. 5. A small fragment of a hand holding an apple.

“These last two objects seem to me of the same marble as that of the statue, but I am unable to decide if they can be reasonably applied to a Venus, the attitude of which I am ignorant of.

“Nos. 6, 7, and 8. Three *hermae*.

“No. 9. A left foot of marble.”

No mention is made in this inventory of a portion of the base; but we shall find among the pieces catalogued at the Louvre, a fragment of marble that bears an inscription and has in it a

quadrangular hole, corresponding in size to the foot of one of the *hermae*.

The pieces numbered one and two, *i. e.* the bust and the draped portion, are so finished at the point of union as to preclude the idea that the statue was ever broken at the waist. There can be no doubt it was made in two pieces, the seam or joint being concealed by the drapery of the inferior half. To make them perfectly secure, iron bolts were placed at the right and left of the centre, near the thighs, as is shown both by the oxidation and the particles of solder that secured the iron to the marble. It is not improbable that the arms were also made of separate pieces and attached to the body by the same means, as the socket of the left arm at the shoulder is perfectly indicated.

The height of the Venus is two metres, thirty-eight millimetres, or a trifle over six feet and

three inches. It is wrought in a very fine grained marble of Pharos, a place then, as it is now, celebrated for that product. As was the custom with the ancients, it had received a coating of some sort, the object of which was to preserve the marble from the effects of air and dampness.

The superior half of the statue had, beside the loss of both arms, received much rough treatment. The back, shoulders and breasts were scarred as if by violent contact with or blows from stones; the nose had been broken for about two-fifths of its length, although the nostrils remained intact; the chin and the lower lip had received slight injuries and the lobes of the ears had been broken, to remove as is supposed the golden ear-rings or precious stones that were often attached to the statues of many of the Greek divinities. The inferior half had the folds

of the drapery broken in many places and the left foot was gone. The base was also so much reduced as to offer no adequate support to the figure.

After the arrival of the statue at the Louvre the slight injuries to the nose, lip, chin and ears were repaired by M. Lange, restorer of antiques at the Louvre, the chignon was put in its place, the left foot was added and the two pieces of the marble raised the one upon the other, as they are seen to-day.

Then arose the question of the complete restoration of the Venus;—whether it could be done satisfactorily; whether it was best to make the attempt. Happily the diversity of opinions upon the subject resulted in leaving it intact: allowing every one to reconstruct it in his own mind according to his own judgment, without seeing it disfigured, (as it is now claimed

many antiques are,) by restorations founded on the caprice or presumption of men who were far from entering into the inspiration that prompted the artist and guided his hand in the work of fashioning them.





II. THEORIES CONCERNING IT.

THE opinions which have been considered the most worthy of notice, concerning the original position of the statue, are those of which M. Quatremere de Quincy, Perpetual Secretary of the Academy of Fine Arts, is the exponent on the one hand, and those of M. de Clarac, Conservator of the Royal Museum of Antiquities, on the other. The first is able to see in this statue, which he names a *Venus Victrix*, a *Venus* grouped with another figure which may have been *Paris*, or *Adonis*, or *Mars*, but

presumably the latter. In support of his theory he refers to the groups in the Florentine Museum, the Museum Royal, Berlin, and that of the Capitol at Rome, besides certain medals and engraved gems on which are similar representations of Venus disarming Mars. He admits however that all are of a much later epoch than the Venus of Milo, but suggests that they are copies, more or less conforming to some celebrated original, of which this Venus was a part. He asserts that the entire left side of the statue is in an unfinished condition and that the face as seen from that side is less pleasing than when looked at from the right, and considers that fact a very strong argument for the probability of the left side being concealed to a degree by a companion figure.

He refuses to recognize in the fragments brought with it from Milo, *i. e.* the arm, the hand holding an apple and the piece of a base, original portions

of the statue, on the ground that the left foot, (which was numbered nine in the catalogue of M. de Marcellus,) cannot possibly belong to it, as it is shod with a sandal ; and consequently the other pieces are quite as likely to have formed a portion of the statue from which this foot was broken as of the Venus. Of the portion of a base he says, "It could not under any circumstances have originally belonged to the statue, nor to its plinth; nor can we derive from the inscription upon it any knowledge of the artist."

The only concession that M. de Quincy is willing to make to the opponents of his theory is, that at some remote time there may have been a restoration of the statue and that these fragments may be the portions supplied to carry out the ideas of the artist who did that work and who placed his name on the new base. And even in making this concession he takes the opportunity to strengthen

his own side of the case by adding, that if this was so, the artist who did the work saw the need of some support on the left side of the figure and made the base with a socket for one of the *hermae* found with it; which although entirely out of keeping and having no connection with the figure, yet was an indication of the idea the restorer had, that something was necessary which he could not supply.

To this theory M. de Clarac answers, that as all the groups of Venus and Mars referred to are comparatively modern, any comparison that can be drawn from them is at best but a conjecture. Most of them are Roman in their origin, and one is a portrait group representing the Emperor Hadrian and his wife Sabina. That of all the divinities represented by Greek artists the figure of Mars is the most uncommon, there being but three mentioned among all the statues enumerated

by Pliny and Pausanias. That the pose of the body and whole appearance of the work forbids the possibility of another figure being in proximity with it, and that a complete and satisfactory solitary figure may be restored with the aid of the few fragments that exist, and which no one disputes were found at the same time and in the same place as the Venus.

He agrees with M. de Quincy in naming the statue *Venus Victrix*, but not *Venus victorious over Mars*, but over Juno and the rivals who contended with her for the prize of the world, the golden apple of Paris. He claims that the forearm, the piece of the hand holding the fruit and the fragment of a base, are all parts of the original statue; that the marble of which they are made is of the same grain and quality as the figure; that the workmanship is identical with it, and that it is possible to trace in the hand and fore arm certain

marks or veins, that prove they were once of the same piece.

To him the Venus appears with the left arm raised, holding high the apple, while the right arm is extended towards the drapery, as if supporting it, or holding some suitable symbol of her character.

This opinion leaves little room for admitting that there may have been an ancient restoration of the statue, and yet granting, for the sake of argument, that it may have been done, M. de Clarac scouts the idea of any one presuming to restore a figure whose beauty even in its day must have rendered it famous, in any other position than the one given by its author. Equally improbable to his mind is the idea that any one would put his own name on the base of such a marble without authority. Who to-day, he pertinently asks, would dare to restore an antique and

insert his name where that of Scopas, or Phidias, or Praxiteles belongs?

Translated, the inscription on the base reads thus:—

“ andre son of Ménides
of Antioche on the Meandre
Maker.”

The first word lacks the first letters, and it may have been Alexandre, or Anaxandre, or any other name ending in andre; but no artist is known to whom the description will apply. The town of Antioche on the Meandre was founded between 312 and 280 B. C., about which later date the school of Praxiteles was at the height of its splendor; and it is to his school that archaeologists and artists agree in attributing the Venus of Milo.

M. de Clarac makes one suggestion not without interest. It is known that Praxiteles made two statues of Venus, one of which was nude and the other draped. The choice of these was given to the Cnidians, who chose the nude, which is now known as the Venus of Cnidus. Tradition says that the other was accepted by the inhabitants of Cos and that both became equally famous. No known copy of the Venus of Cos has been identified and the original has disappeared. "May not the Venus of Milo," asks M. de Clarac, "be the veritable Venus of Cos, or at least a reproduction of it?"

Without pursuing these theories in detail it may be interesting to glance at some of the ideas advanced concerning the work, none of which have found much favor, excepting perhaps with their authors.

One would restore the Venus as if holding a shield or tablet with the left hand, the lower part of which should rest on the knee that is raised and thrown forward, while with the right hand she inscribes thereon. There is a figure, known as the Winged Victory of Brescia, which has a similar position, although seated. Of this it is but just to remark that the wings, arms and tablet are restorations.

Others would represent her as a Muse holding a lyre in the left hand and striking it with the right. To this it is enough to answer, that no representation of one of the Muses without drapery is known to exist among all of the ancient statues which have come down to us.

Others would represent her as a Venus of the bath, holding a mirror in the right hand and raising the left hand to the head as if to

arrange the hair. A small figure was found at Pompeii which had this position and was by some considered to bear a resemblance to the Venus of Milo.

Others have suggested that she might be the protecting divinity of the island where she was found and that the apple in the hand was significant of the care exercised over its interests. This idea arose from the fact that the name Melos signifies a fruit, or melon. The ancient coins in use there were stamped with this device.

This is the story of the Venus of Milo, and these the various opinions that have been expressed concerning it, from the time of its discovery until within a few years. No one will read the story without detecting its inconsistencies, and a desire manifest in it to overpraise at least one of the persons instrumental in procuring the precious

relic. After many years one man was enough interested in the subject to attempt to separate the truth from the fiction, and to throw what new light could be found upon the story.

M. Jean Aicard, in the year 1847, published in *Le Temps*, half a dozen articles entitled "Researches on the Discovery of the Venus of Milo."

These researches extended over a space of two years and were the means of bringing to notice a journal written by M. Dumont d'Urville, the officer who saw the Venus in the peasant's hut. Dying in 1842, without direct heirs, there was a sale of his effects in Toulon, and an amateur of bibliographic curiosities bought his papers, among which was "An account of a hydrographic expedition in the Levant and the Black Sea, on board the transport *Chevrette*, commanded by Captain Gauttier in the year 1820."

This journal contains the particulars of his visit to the island of Milo and what he saw there. It was published in the "Maritime Annals," after his return, with the exception of certain paragraphs, which the discovery of this manuscript gives every reason to suppose were suppressed. Even the published report, being an official document, had but few readers, and is not mentioned in any of the writings on the Venus until M. Aicard noticed it.

In it M. d'Urville, speaking of the statue, says: "The two parts, which I measured separately, are little less than six feet in height, representing a nude female, whose left hand raised held an apple and the right hand sustained a belt, cleverly draped and falling negligently from the waist to the feet. They have both been mutilated and actually detached from the body."

This evidence of itself would seem to be suffi-

cient to settle the long disputed question, and it is a matter of wonder that it was not long ago produced; but with it we are made acquainted with some new facts which may account for the suppression.

The gentleman who purchased the memoirs had among his friends one named Lieut. Matterer, who was also on board the *Chevrette* in 1820, and was intimately acquainted with the writer of them. In examining the papers this was found to contain the name of Matterer, and was placed in his hands in the belief that it would be a pleasure to him to read it. Lieut. Matterer had never seen it as published in the *Maritime Annals*, in fact was not aware that it had been; and when he returned it, this marginal note was written on the manuscript, among others, "It is to be regretted that the Academy of War has not yet printed this interesting writing; par-

ticularly as its author was one of its honorable members," etc. In conversing on the subject, Lieut. Matterer said, "All the truth concerning the Venus of Milo is not known; but I know it." He then confided to his friend that which he had learned, and afterwards put it in writing, not wishing other persons to know either what he had spoken or written. At this time he was retired from active service, but doing duty as a Major of marines at Toulon, where he died in 1868,—ten years later. His statement corroborates that of M. d'Urville, although he does not agree with him concerning the position of the right arm, but says it was missing when they saw it.

The most interesting part of his story, however, is that which he afterwards learned concerning the exodus of the Venus from the island; in all the other particulars his account is substantially the same as given by others. It commences with

the arrival of the Estafette, with M. de Marcellus, in the harbor of Milo, when the statue, already in the possession of *Oiconomos*—as he calls the priest—was on its way to the beach to be shipped on the Turkish vessel.

M. de Marcellus saw, from the deck of his schooner, the crowd of men who were on the beach, and being informed of what had occurred and that the object of his visit was on the point of escaping him,—“of being ravished before his eyes,”—he armed his crew and with his score of marines hastened to land and laid claim to the Venus; which the priest was of course unwilling to give up. High words were succeeded by blows, and the captain of the Estafette, M. Robert,—who had won the soubriquet of “Robert the Devil,”—urged on his men who put the Greeks to rout. Raising the marble which had been thrown down, and around which the contest had

been the fiercest, it was put in the boat, transferred to the schooner, and immediately she made all haste to put to sea. It was in this melee, claims M. Arcaid, that the arms of the statue were broken and lost,—the sailors not having time to search for the pieces, that may have been carried off, or thrown into the water by the Turks.

This story is so surprisingly at variance with that heretofore received, that it would hardly obtain credence without some testimony to corroborate it. This is supplied by M. Jules Ferry, Ambassador to Greece, who in 1873 visited the island of Milo. In talking with the people he found there a well preserved tradition, which recounted the finding of the marble, its sale to the Greek priest, and the battle over it on the sea-shore, in which the Frenchmen were victorious; although the Consul, M. Brest, is made

the hero of the engagement rather than Captain Robert.

M. Ferry also saw and talked with the son of the peasant who discovered the marble. This man was present when it was unearthed and declared that at that time the left arm was intact, raised aloft and holding an apple in the hand; and his testimony is corroborated by the son of M. Brest, who succeeded his father in the office of Consul at the island. He says that his father always told him the statue had an apple raised in the left hand, and remembers how he used to illustrate the position by raising his own arm, whenever he told the story.

Here, then, we have three men who claim to have seen the Venus with the left arm perfect. Dumont D'Urville, Lieut. Matterer, and the son of the peasant Georges; and another, M. Brest, Jr., whose testimony, although not direct, is not

less valuable; and in the absence of direct witnesses to the fight over the marble body, it seems to be so probable, but little doubt can be felt that it was by force, instead of by diplomacy, as claimed heretofore, that the Venus was won for France.

The question naturally arises, what object was there in denying the facts, or suppressing any portion of them? Although it is easy to find more than one answer, it must be confessed they are answers which seem to most of us to-day unsatisfactory.

The first one given is, that it was the wish of M. de Marcellus to make it appear that his diplomatic skill and address had achieved a victory over men little likely to be moved by such talent; and this would be naturally supported by his desire to conceal the fact that the Venus

had been broken by any act of his. Beyond this there might be an object in suppressing any report of the fight, for fear of troubles that might arise out of it, if either the Turkish or Grecian authorities should be disposed to resent it.

Silence having been the policy decided upon, it was much more easy to keep the secret than it would be to-day; because the island then was seldom visited by travelers and news was not as eagerly seized upon, or as quickly transmitted as in the present time. The men who were engaged in the affair were in the habit of obeying orders and those who in any way became the recipients of the secret were, like M. Matterer, the retired Major of marines, fearful of incurring the disapproval of their superiors if they mentioned it; or like Admiral D'Urville, who passed the greater part of his life so far from home that he was

never likely to hear the subject mentioned, and therefore had no occasion to tell what he knew about the Venus.

But there were two other men whose silence it was necessary to secure, more difficult to deal with than all the others. They must have some substantial reason for keeping quiet, and that reason has been found if we may believe M. Aicard.

In the first account it was said that, after the Venus was wrested from the priest, the Prince, for whom it was intended, caused the chiefs of Milo to pay him damages in the sum of seven thousand piastres,—that upon the complaint of the French Ambassador this edict was reversed by the Sultan and the Prince himself fined. The truth is that M. the Marquis de Riviere was an intimate friend of this Prince, whose name was Nickola Mourisi, and that, instead of com-

plaining of his conduct, he quietly paid the sum out of his own purse in behalf of the chiefs and that the account of the Prince being fined is all a myth. M. de Riviere thus paid most extravagantly for his Venus and for silence.

M. Aicard in his articles has carefully weighed all that can be said for and against the new and the old stories, and has made the new one to appear the more probable of the two. He has even gone so far as to assert that the Count of Clarac knew the facts in the case when he formed his theory, and that he was intrusted with the secret either by M. de Marcellus, in whose praises he was so loud, or some one else equally well informed. What effect the publication of these researches produced upon the theorists does not appear, but it is more than probable that, if admitted as true by those whose theory they overthrow, the old argument of a former restora-

tion will be more strongly advanced, which can only be replied to by those whose opinions this story corroborates, by the question, Who would presume to restore such a work save in the original position, or according to some reliable tradition?





III. ITS SUBSEQUENT HISTORY.



UT as the years rolled on, our Venus, surrounded by her admirers, defended by a strong nation, which having gained her, whether by diplomacy or by force, were willing to resort to both to retain her, heard far off the terrible rumble of war. A war not like that which in her island-home had overturned her pedestal and defaced her beauty, but a more cruel and destructive war, for mortals if not for immortals. She need not fear further mutilation or overthrow, but she had, so her protectors

thought, the possible prospect of being taken captive and carried from Paris to Berlin. Even before the sound of the German guns were heard in Paris, while even it might have been a fear to be scouted by the populace, the guardians of the sacred treasures of the Louvre were mindful to prepare for the worst that the chances of war could bring to them.

The pictures of most value, those master-pieces of the great artists, which never could be replaced and are so easily destroyed, were first rolled, packed and forwarded to Brest, whence they could have been easily shipped to England. But the marbles were not as easily handled and packed, their immense weight and size demanding more care and time to prepare them to be moved, and for the Venus a hiding-place was contrived, in which she might lie concealed until the smoke of battle had rolled away. Reverent hands

removed her from her pedestal and laid her in a strong oak box, so massive that no outward blow nor untoward accident might carry harm to the beautiful body within. In the night it was taken quietly from the Louvre by a certain door, where it was intrusted to men who were ignorant of its contents,—as were those who delivered it, of its destination,—and carried by them to the building of the Prefect of Police.

That building was one of the massive structures whose foundation was divided into a labyrinth by the walls that composed it. At the end of one of these passageways the box was placed and a wall built up before it as much like the surrounding ones as possible, and besmeared or whitened, that all trace of newness might be effaced that could give suspicion of aught concealed behind it. But this alone was not enough. Another wall was built, between which and the first a mass of

documents were packed, of such a nature that it might readily be supposed there was a desire to conceal them. Thus a false treasure masked the true one, and the Venus was left, not without many misgivings we may believe, but still with a reasonable faith that no ordinary search would reveal her to the enemy advancing to the gates, even if he were brave enough to enter; and in the certainty that she was out of the reach of his projectiles.

The siege of Paris ended, and the Germans turned their faces towards their homes. Venus was about to be summoned from her hiding-place, when the Commune, like a fearful miasma, rose from the slums of Paris, and the city was in a state of siege for the second time. Then the Venus had even greater danger to fear than before. In the hands of the Germans her person

would have been perfectly safe from all insult and harm ; but if, by any chance, she should have fallen into the clutches of the demons who held sway in Paris after the evacuation of the foreigners, what could she have looked for but the most brutal and inhuman treatment—even worse than that she had received in her far away home a thousand and more years before. Naturally that which is hideous has a horror for that which is beautiful ; and this master-piece would have been offensive to the envious mob that surged through the streets, for it would have reminded those Communists of a higher order of beings than themselves, which would have insured its destruction.

But fortunately the secret of the Venus had been well kept, and there was no probability of the Communists seeking for works of art; so the custodians of the statue were under less apprehension.

hension than its admirers, who were not aware of its concealment. But that fearful day came when human rage and hatred reached its height, and the finest buildings, flooded with petroleum, were touched by the torches of incendiaries. Among these was the Prefecture of Police. What must have been the dismay of those who, in attempting to secure the Venus from human desecration, had placed her at the mercy of the fiery element, without hope of rescue. Never again could they have expected to see her beautiful form that they had entombed with so much care, but only to collect from her cremation a few handfuls of lime, the cinders of her marble flesh, to treasure as a souvenir of her existence.

As soon as the city was wrested from the control of these lunatics, immediate measures were taken to remove the debris of the building

and ascertain the fate of the statue. Upon uncovering the box, happily, even miraculously, it was found intact, uninjured by heat, or fire, or the fallen walls. A water-pipe had broken near the spot and kept the flames at bay. The element out of which Venus was born had thus protected her “counterfeit presentment.”

The coffer was borne back to the Louvre with rejoicing, and in the presence of a committee named to assist at the ceremony, it was opened. The long sojourn in the damp hiding-place had not injured the marble, but in attempting to remove it, the plaster that concealed the seams and joints detached itself, because of the moisture it had absorbed, and the committee beheld the separate pieces of the statue as they were in 1821. But not those alone as enumerated by M. de Marcellus. Now, seven fragments go to make up the ensemble, viz. the superior

block and the chignon, the inferior block from which were detached the two thighs in three pieces, and the base. The pieces at the thighs had evidently been fractured at some early day by the iron bolts that had held the two blocks in place. These bolts were fixed at the right and left of the centre of the body, necessarily not far from the hips, and whether by the effect of oxidation, or from some violent shock, they caused, each one on its own side, a rupture.

In the displacement of these pieces some singular facts were revealed. One was that the fragment from the right side of the upper block was not the one which was originally broken off, but a piece that had been substituted. This was made evident, because the piece and the place into which it fitted were cut and squared with a tool to match each other. Another revelation

was made by the appearance of two wooden wedges between the upper and lower blocks, running from the back towards the front, two centimetres in thickness and twenty-five in length. These, it was evident upon examination, were put there to remedy a fault in the restoration of the fragment of the left thigh on the lower block. That fragment was allowed to rise above the level of the portion to which it was fixed, and consequently when the upper block was put in its position, the edge of the left side was obliged to bear a weight that might have broken it. To relieve it these pieces of wood were introduced, and they gave the body an inclination to the front and to the right side.

The committee caused the pieces to be properly fitted, the one to the other, and found that the upper surface of the draped portion and the lower surface of the bust exactly matched each other

and assumed a position that they could not but believe was the correct one.

Furthermore it was shown, that the false base into which the foot of the statue had been fixed to give it a proper support, did not stand on the same level as the figure stood without it. It was arranged so that, to a degree, it counteracted the inclination of the figure to the right, in which direction there was danger of its falling by a very slight disturbance, when standing on its own base. Although, when readjusted by the committee, it was not materially different in its pose from the one in which so many photographs and reproductions have fixed the Venus ineffaceably in the universal memory, yet there was a perceptible alteration which every one acquainted with the figure would recognize,—a difference of about twelve millimetres in the perpendicular.

It is impossible to understand, allowing these statements to be true, how the persons having the first restoration of the Venus in charge, could have allowed such a faulty piece of workmanship as the replacing of the piece on the left hip to remain unaltered; especially as it was a fault, not merely of workmanship, but one that seriously affected the entire aspect of the figure, and obliged them to commit a second fault,—the using of the wedges—to cover up the first.

With these facts before the committee there arose a question as difficult and as delicate to decide as that of its restoration in 1821, and after due consideration the conclusion was not unlike that of the former time. It was thought best to replace it in the old position given it by M. Lange. Before that was done, a reproduction was made in plaster, which is placed where it can readily be compared with the original.

There, where it has stood for over half a century, may it evermore remain, undisturbed by wars, or rumors of wars, by fire, or aught that can bring harm to its matchless form, to realize to all generations to come that "A thing of beauty is a joy forever."





PRAXITELES AND PHRYNE.

A THOUSAND silent years ago,
The starlight, faint and pale,
Was drawing on the sunset glow
Its soft and shadowy veil ;

When from his work the sculptor stayed
His hand, and turned to one
Who stood beside him, half in shade,
Said, with a sigh, "T is done."

"Phryne, thy human lips shall pale,
Thy rounded limbs decay,
Nor love nor prayers can aught avail
To bid thy beauty stay ;

“But there thy smile for centuries
On marble lips shall live—
For Art can grant what Love denies,
And fix the fugitive.

“Sad thought ! nor age nor death shall fade
The youth of this cold bust,
When the quick brain and hand that made,
And thou and I, are dust !

“When all our hopes and fears are dead,
And both our hearts are cold,
And love is like a tune that’s played,
And life a tale that’s told.

“This counterfeit of senseless stone,
That no sweet blush can warm,
That same enchanting look shall own
The same enchanting form.

“And there upon that silent face
Shall unborn ages see
Perennial youth, perennial grace,
And sealed serenity.

“And strangers, when we sleep in peace,
Shall say, not quite unmoved—
‘So smiled upon Praxiteles
The Phryne whom he loved.’”

W. W. STORY.





TO THE VENUS OF MELOS.



GODDESS of that Grecian isle
Whose shore the blue *Æ*gean laves,
Whose cliffs repeat with answering smile
Their features in its sun-kissed waves,—

An exile from thy native place,
We view thee in a Northern clime,
Yet mark on thy majestic face
A glory still undimmed by Time.

Through those calm lips, proud Goddess, speak !
Portray to us thy gorgeous fane,
Where Melian suitors thronged to seek
Thine aid, Love's Paradise to gain ;

Where, oft as in the saffron East
Day's jewelled gates were open flung,
With stately pomp th' attendant priest
Drew back the veil before thee hung;

And as the daring kiss of morn,
Empurpling, made thy charms more fair,
Sweet strains, from unseen minstrels born,
Awoke from dreams the perfumed air.

Vouchsafe at least our minds to free
From doubts pertaining to thy charms ;
The meaning of thy bended knee,
The secret of thy vanished arms !

Wast thou in truth conjoined with Mars ?
Did thy fair hands his shield embrace,
The surface of whose golden bars
Grew lovely from thy mirrored face ?

Or was it some bright scroll of Fame
Thus poised on thine extended knee,
Upon which thou didst trace the name
Of that fierce god so dear to thee?

Whate'er thou hadst, no mere delight
Was thine, the glittering prize to hold ;
Not thine the form which met thy sight
Repling from the burnished gold !

Unmindful what thy hands retained,
Thy gaze was fixed beyond, above ;
Some dearer object held enthralled
The goddess of immortal love !

We mark the motion of thine eyes
And smile,—for heldst thou shield or scroll,
A tender love-glance we surprise
Which tells the secret of thy soul !

J. L. STODDARD.

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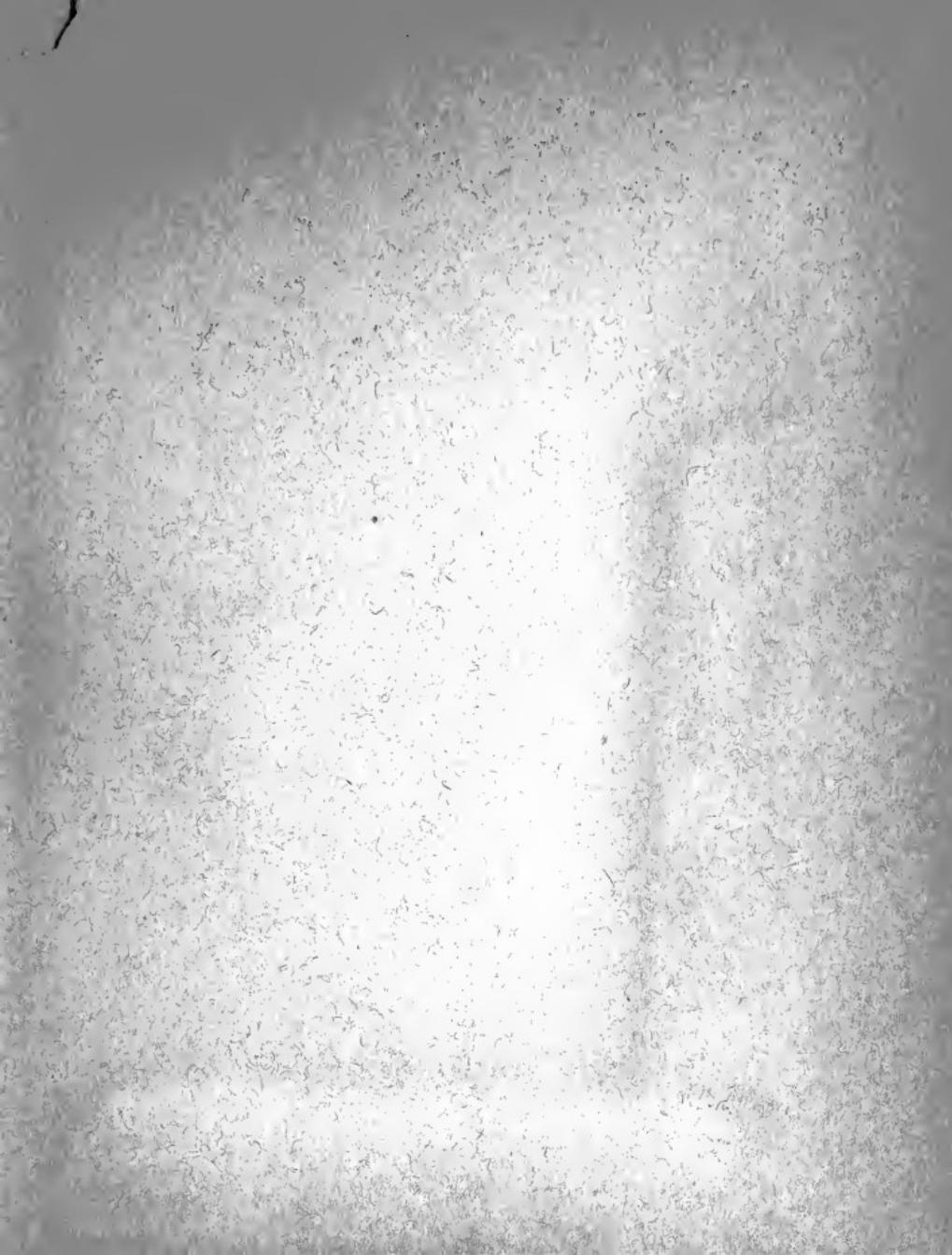








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